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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/615,006	07/08/2003	Patrick James Walsh	PW 102	8133
7590	01/06/2005		EXAMINER	
William Eshelman 3130 Panhandle Road Front Royal, VA 22630			LE, HUYEN D	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3751	

DATE MAILED: 01/06/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/615,006	WALSH, PATRICK JAMES	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Huyen Le	3751	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 09 November 2004.
- 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-26 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 1-11 and 17-26 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 12-16 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	Paper No(s)/Mail Date: _____
3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date: _____	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

2. Claims 12-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Tash (6,192,525).

The Tash reference discloses an apparatus comprising a drain clearing apparatus 15 having a seal 55 at one end thereof, the seal 55 including a hollow truncated cone having an external surface (Figs. 7A and 7B), the external surface having a plurality of flanges 52,57 disposed thereon, a large diameter end of the cone being attached to the drain clearing apparatus 15.

Regarding claim 14, diameters of the flexible flange decrease in a direction away from the drain clearing apparatus.

Regarding claim 15, the undersides of the flanges are angled up and away from the hollow truncated cone of the seal.

3. Claim 12-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Brown et al (4,077,430).

The Brown reference discloses a seal for a drain clearing apparatus comprising a hollow truncated cone B having an external surface, the external surface having a

plurality of flanges S1 and S 2 disposed thereon, a large diameter end of the cone being attached to the drain clearing apparatus 27.

Regarding claim 14, diameters of the flexible flange decrease in a direction away from the drain clearing apparatus.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claims 15 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Brown et al (4,077,430) in view of Caverley (1,271,853).

The Brown reference discloses a seal comprising a flange S2 and the underside of S2 being angled up and away from the cone 12.

Although the Brown reference discloses only one lower flange S2, attention directed to the Caverley reference which discloses another seal for a drain comprising more than one flange 8 on the cone.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to employ more than one lower flange on the Brown seal in view of the teaching of the Caverley reference for enhancing the sealing effect in the drain.

Response to Arguments

6. Applicant's arguments filed 11/09/2004 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Regarding the applicant's arguments with respect to Turner that the bellow 55 no way functions or resembles a seal, examiner disagrees with the applicant because the claims do not include enough the specific structures of the seal that can distinguish over the Turner device (bellow 55) which is capable of functioning as a "seal". The members 51, 52 and 57 are considered "flanges" which are parts of the "seal" 55 (see paragraph 2 above). The bellow 55 (seal) with truncated hollow configuration and flanges 52, 57 on its external surface are readable on the claim limitations.

Regarding the applicant's arguments that Brown et al discloses a seal but no drain clearing apparatus, all other functional statements of the intended use have been carefully considered but deemed not to impose any structural limitations on the claims distinguishable over the Brown et al device which is capable of being used as a drain clearing apparatus.

Conclusion

7. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the

Art Unit: 3751

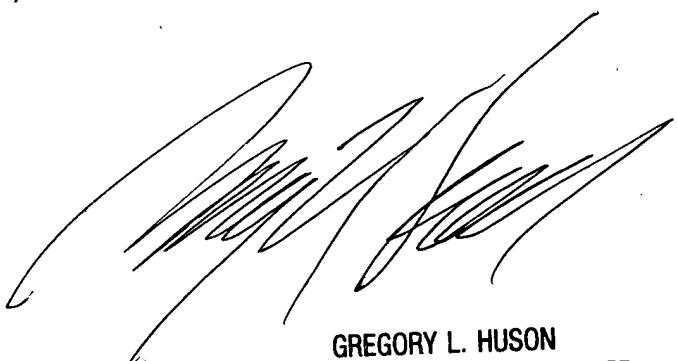
shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Huyen Le whose telephone number is 571-272-4890. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Gregory Huson can be reached on 571-272-4887. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

HL
December 29, 2004



GREGORY L. HUSON
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3700